

commitment and obligation to openness and transparency, while his kind and helpful character has been a benefit to everyone in the Senate community.

Raymond first worked for the Architect of the Capitol where he was tasked with jobs from busing tables at lunchtime to flying flags over the Capitol Building. He was soon hired as a clerk by the Secretary of the Senate and would go on to serve in the Office of Public Records taking on responsibilities ranging from lobbying registration to campaign finance disclosure.

During his many years of service, Raymond always put customer service first. Candidates who filed a Senate campaign report, and Senators and staff members who filed a financial disclosure report or other Senate report, encountered Raymond's efficient and very capable assistance. Over the years, he also assisted those filing lobbying registrations and reports. The public, the press and researchers have all benefitted from his knowledge and guidance in the Office of Public Records.

Raymond is known throughout the Senate community, to those who frequent his office and to those who look forward to his cheerful greeting each day in the halls, as a friendly and welcoming colleague. An avid sportsman, Raymond was a slugger for the Senate Document Room softball team and a regular at Senate coed football and Capitol Hill touch football league games.

Through his deft knowledge and faithful customer service, Raymond has significantly contributed to the functioning of this institution. He has been an important mentor to others, helping to train staff and pass on the knowledge he gained in four decades of work.

The Senate can be proud of Raymond Davis' legacy of public service. We are grateful for his many contributions, and we wish him well in retirement and all his future endeavors.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, due to unexpected family commitments, I was unable to cast a vote relative to rollcall vote Nos. 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, and 30. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: yea on the nomination of Robert E. Bacharach to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Tenth District, yea on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Charles T. Hagel to be Secretary of Defense, yea on the nomination of Jacob L. Lew to be Secretary of the Treasury, yea on the nomination of Katherine Failla to be U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York, nay on Senate amendment No. 25 related to elimination of funding for the National Security Working Group, and yea on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Caitlin Joan Halligan to be U.S. Cir-

cuit Judge for the District of Columbia Court.

COMMEMORATING ISRAEL'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this year marks 65 years since the State of Israel was born, and I wish to speak today about the importance of that occasion and the celebration that will take place in communities all across the world.

Our country has a deep friendship with Israel, dating back to just 11 minutes after its creation on May 14, 1948, when President Harry Truman became one of the first world leaders to recognize Israel's independence.

Our two nations have always been friends and allies in our struggle to make the world a safer place. I am proud of our long friendship and our shared values.

When Israel was founded, the Jewish people finally had a home. The new State provided not only a refuge to Jews who survived the unprecedented horrors of the Holocaust, but also a place to begin anew. Even in such a tough and unforgiving climate, the Jewish people knew they could build a country that could help change the world.

The Walk the Land 65 project is the perfect way to celebrate Israel's anniversary. The theme of this year's walk is to celebrate life, and people all across the world will join together and walk through their communities by honoring Israel's gifts to the world, especially those regarding life: creating life, sustaining life, saving life, preserving life, enhancing life, protecting life, improving life, cherishing life, nurturing life and beautifying life.

As a collaboration between the Afikim Foundation, the World Zionist Organization and the Israel Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, Walk the Land 65 is showing the world just how important Israel's contributions to the world really are.

I am pleased to see walks taking place across my home State of Michigan: in Flint, Grand Rapids and Metro Detroit.

Every religious, cultural and ethnic group across the State is an important thread in Michigan's rich cultural fabric. We in Michigan are proud of our Jewish communities and their contributions to our State.

One important attribute that the people of Israel share with the people of the United States is our system of values. Both countries are lands of freedom and democracy. While these two countries were formed at very different times, they both uphold and honor critical freedoms—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and government by the consent of the governed.

This foundation has led to a country that truly celebrates life and works to improve life across the world. Israel

began in a desert, but today, it is a fountain of culture, innovation and industry.

This didn't happen overnight, though. David Ben-Gurion and the founders of Israel had a great vision for their country. They built Israel from scratch, turning the arid land into fertile farms and thriving cities.

Israel is a leader in innovation for creating, sustaining, preserving and saving lives through its work in agriculture and health care. It is also enhancing life through its innovation in technology, alternative energy and so many other fields.

Today, Israel is among the top three countries in the world in terms of patents per capita, and number one in terms of startup businesses per capita. Israel is also a leader in clean energy research and development, and is helping to create the power the world needs.

The Israeli people are leaders in celebrating life, as evidenced by their humanitarian works and their pioneering medical advances that will save and improve people's lives, and they are making a real difference throughout the world.

Israel continues to serve as a shining model of democratic values, and an important presence in the region; it shows the world that democracy can survive—and—thrive anywhere people wish to be free.

I am proud of our friendship, and I am proud to help celebrate Israel's 65th Anniversary with the Walk the Land 65 Project.

Congratulations to the people Israel and everyone involved in this wonderful project.

OBSERVING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about International Women's Day. International Women's Day is an occasion to honor and praise women for their accomplishments and to celebrate women who are making a difference, both here in America and around the world. Already this year, we have seen advances for women in the United States. In January, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced that women in the military can now join their male colleagues on the front line. America's military is the greatest in the world and it has been made stronger with the promise of equal opportunity for women and men. Last month, we reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, which provides victims of domestic violence with the services they desperately need.

We need to ensure that women across the world, not just in the United States, have the same liberty to determine the scope of their own lives and futures. Unfortunately, in far too many nations women face extraordinary obstacles. A woman's ability to earn a sustained income is severely limited by